

Sale of personal data admitted

Ex-Social Security worker pleads guilty to one federal charge

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A West Memphis woman admitted Wednesday to a federal judge that she used her position as an employee of the Social Security Administration office in that city to sell confidential information to a man in Little Rock who used it for criminal purposes.

Leeanna Brooke Morgan, 31, pleaded guilty to a single charge of illegally transferring someone's date of birth and mother's maiden name for the purpose of misusing a Social Security number. The charge stemmed from her reply to a text message she received for the information on June 29, 2011, from Julian Dinnwiddie, Assistant U.S.

Attorney Jana Harris told the judge.

The charge also stemmed from an investigation by Charles Briscoe, a special agent with the Office of Inspector General for the Social Security Administration, after the June 28, 2011, arrest of Dinnwiddie and a female accomplice by Little Rock police in connection with

crimes involving counterfeit checks.

Police searched Dinnwiddie's car and found documents containing the personal identifiers — names, dates of birth and Social Security numbers — for about 85 people, Briscoe said in a federal criminal complaint filed last July.

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The documents, as well as text messages found on Dinnwiddie's cell phone, linked him to Morgan, and prompted a special fraud unit within the West Memphis Social Security office to begin analyzing an employee database, according to Briscoe's complaint and Harris' rendition of facts in court.

Through the analysis, Harris said, investigators learned that Morgan had made inquiries in the agency's database on about 50 percent of the people whose personal identifiers were found in Dinnwiddie's vehicle.

Briscoe's complaint said he contacted one of the people whose records Morgan had searched, only to discover that the man hadn't made any requests that would have prompted anyone in the Social Security office to access his personal information. But the man said he had been notified by the Capitol One fraud department that someone had tried to open a fraudulent credit card account using his personal information.

Briscoe's complaint said conversations with other people whose identifiers were found in Dinnwiddie's car also indicated they hadn't taken any actions that would have prompted anyone to access their personal information. A Little Rock police report indicated that the victims were elderly.

A plea agreement Morgan negotiated through attorney Justin Eisele of the federal public defender's office states that she will be responsible, when sentenced at a later date, for making restitution of less than \$5,000. It also says that her sentence will be partly calculated on the number of victims involved: between 10 and 50.

Harris said Morgan's job at the Social Security office, where she had worked since April 12, 2009, was that of a service representative. Her duties included processing applications for new and replacement Social Security cards, giving her access to personal identifiers in the database.

U.S. District Judge Susan Webber Wright, who accepted Morgan's guilty plea, told her that when she is sentenced at a later date, after a pretrial investigation is complete, she faces up to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000 under federal statutes. The sentence also will be affected by federal sentencing guidelines that judges must consider and that usually suggest a penalty range below the maximum.

Wright noted that Morgan has "done well" on pretrial supervision, and allowed her to remain free under the same conditions until sentencing, which won't be scheduled for at least 45 days.

Pulaski County Circuit Court documents show that Dinnwiddie, 32, of Little Rock was sentenced on Oct. 31, 2011, to five years' probation and 50 hours of community service, and was ordered to pay a \$1,000 fine, on a forgery charge. He was given credit for his jail time since his arrest.

An accomplice, Latasha Elaine Crudup, 31, also of Little Rock, was sentenced on Nov. 8, 2011, to three years' probation, and also was ordered to perform 50 hours of community service and pay a \$1,000 fine. Records indicate she was given credit for two weeks of jail time.

Both had originally been charged with second-degree forgery and financial-identity fraud. According to an arrest report, the event leading to a search of Dinnwiddie's car, in which Crudup was a passenger, was Crudup's attempt to cash a counterfeit check.